

FAIRBANKS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

City of Fairbanks Engineering Conference Room
800 Cushman Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2009

1. Call to Order

Donna Gardino called the meeting to order at 12:00pm.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

- * FMATS Policy Committee members
- ** FMATS Staff members
- *** FMATS Technical Committee members

NAME	REPRESENTING
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Jen Peterson	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Jim Blizzard for	Michael Meeks (absent) Ft. Wainwright
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF
*** Bill Butler	City of North Pole
*** Bruce Carr	ARRC
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
*** Bernardo Hernandez	(12:09) FNSB Director Community Planning
*** Jerry Colp	(absent) Mike Schmetzer, City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Marc Wohlford	(absent) UAF Facilities Services
*** Eric Fitzgerald	(absent) Tanana Chiefs Conference
** Todd Boyce	FNSB
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF
Kathleen Vincent	City of Fairbanks
Alice Edwards	ADEC
Jon Watts	Polar Supply Company
Meadow Bailey	DOT Public Information Officer
Bob Dulla	Sierra Research
Mary Pagel	URS Corporation

3. Public Comment

NONE

4. Approval of the February 4, 2009 Agenda.

- **MOTION:** To approve the February 4, 2009 agenda as amended. Bernardo added the informational item: Cushman 2-way Resolution proposed by City of Fairbanks Councilman Cleworth as an informational item. (Carr/Peterson) None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the January 7, 2009 Minutes.

- **MOTION:** To approve the January 7, 2009 minutes. (Carr/Birkholz). None opposed. Approved.

6. Committee Reports.

a. Sidewalk Maintenance Sub-Committee

Donna reported an email request has been sent to the sub-committee members requesting the necessary sidewalk data, such as committed staff and equipment, by February 13 so it can be put on a map. A meeting will be scheduled once compiled.

7. Old Business TIP Conformity Update

a. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update

Donna reported that DOT is in LRTP update negotiations with the consultant, Kittleson, and that in recent meetings we requested the inclusion of a freight plan and integrating smart growth and climate change to the scope.

Donna reported that LRTP and the LRTP Conformity Analysis is a 4 year plan which will lapse in August 2009. Discussions with Peter Serrano verified that at that time it will not be SAFETEA-LU compliant and conformity lapses. If it lapses, no more money can be programmed or obligated. Peter is working to get an extension. The current contract with Kittleson is scheduled for completion in December 2009 and that these were the terms of the original RFP. Peter will have an answer about the extension by next week. If not possible, a shorter timeframe and/or scope will be negotiated.

Donna reported that as a result of the delay in contracting with Kittleson, FMATS lost \$50K Planning Funds (PL) due to the fact that these funds cannot be carried over from 2008 to 2009. DOT was able to get this money returned to FMATS due to the circumstances. In addition \$28K was identified as being available, totaling \$78K.

Bernardo asked why freight was not originally included in the agreement. Donna clarified that it was included in the original contract but it was to be a "freight element", rather than a comprehensive freight analysis and plan. Currently it is being changed in order to provide a more thorough consideration due to potential gas line development. FMATS staff will be meeting with Bob Dulla, Sierra Research, and Dr. Ming Lee, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, to further evaluate the traffic model options for meeting the conformity needs and while making the deadlines.

Bruce Carr emphasized the importance of revising the freight plan in light of the fact that freight is an important part of the FMATS transportation network. He went on to suggest that FTA be consulted with regards to the LRTP extension.

Donna informed the committee that the cost is going to increase as a result of the additions. Total funds available are \$293K.

b. TIP Conformity Update

Donna explained that the 2009-2012 TIP cannot proceed as planned due to a delay in the completion of the conformity model being prepared by Dr. Ming Lee. This modeling is an important part of the conformity determination. This will be addressed at the meeting with Dr. Lee.

Donna stated that this 2009-2012 TIP Conformity delay presents a challenge to FMATS adding of projects to utilize potential Economic Recovery Projects. The question is how to add projects to the existing 2006-2009 TIP without triggering a Conformity determination. The two projects that are not already in the 06-09 TIP are both exempt from needing a conformity determination: the Curb-Cut project (ADA Compliance) and the LED Street Light Project. This situation can be resolved by an Amendment to the 06-09 TIP, which will include a 30 day public comment period. The Amendment #9 in the meeting packet contains these projects, along with the routine administrative adjustments.

Bruce asked about the status. Donna said is not yet out to public comment. Bruce stated interest in moving other projects to the Economic Recovery list that are already in the TIP (Fairbanks Intermodal Yard). Donna requested that he give them to her.

8. New Business

a. COF LED Street Light Conversion Project (Action Item)

Donna introduced this new project as being added as an Economic Recovery project presented by the City of Fairbanks. It is a good fit because the scope of the project is flexible. Since this project will not score well according to the standard scoring criteria, Donna wanted to discuss some of the cost savings and maintenance reduction benefits that would otherwise not be factored in.

Bob inserted that the reason that it does not a good fit the scoring criteria is that the project does nothing to directly enhance safety unless you indirectly consider that they need 5 times less maintenance due to longer life span. Workers are then exposed to hazards less frequently.

Bill asked if the LED project affects other possibly higher priority projects that are already included. He asked that this be considered since there are other funds available for energy efficiency related projects specifically. Bob clarified that it comes down to being an issue of timing. Other projects that it could possibly compete with are simply not "shovel-ready". For example, Donna, referenced specific alternatives that are important, however given the timeframe presented in the Economic Recovery Bill are not possible. Donna is asking DOT for estimates on timing for any other projects that fall into the potential category.

Bruce explained the difficulty of obligating 50% of the money within the timeframe. Bruce explained some of the potential time frame scenarios that could result from this Bill's passing.

Donna said that it is a difficult task identifying what is "shovel-ready" when the timeframes have not been established. FMATS is expecting \$8.4 million. Donna stated her confidence in Phillips Field Road and Wendell.

Bernardo asked about the Barnette Project's eligibility for Economic Recovery funding. Ethan said that it would be eligible under the "slow award" potential Bill scenario, but that does us no good because half the money needs to be obligated in first 90 days. Bernardo asked if this is possible, and Ethan said it is not likely but is desirable as it would free up other money for other projects.

- **MOTION:** To add the LED Project and Sign Replacement Project (pending conformity exempt status) to the Economic Recovery list. (Carr/Peterson) None opposed. Approved.

Comments: Bill said, about the LED project, that it makes no sense to score it because it does not fit the criteria. Then he suggested the Sign Project. Bob said that it would be possible if compiling a sign database could be included advertised as part of the Design/Build phase, it could potentially be ready in time.

Donna pointed out that if signs had to be moved it could require conformity.

Bernardo asked if the public is pleased with the LED light quality. Bob said yes. Bernardo pointed out the cost savings again.

Donna said that adding the sign replacement project could be of value in order to add flexibility and ensure spending of the money.

Ethan said that the STIP is not identifying slow-award vs. fast-award specifically.

Donna needs to confirm that the sign replacement does not need a conformity determination before adding it to the list.

Bernardo asked what DOT is doing in terms of LED light replacement. Ethan replied that he is not sure, but a good comparison of the 2 lights exists at College and Old Steese. Bernardo asked the difference. Ethan said that the LED shows up better. Bob described the technical difference and that LED is better at showing detail therefore less energy can be powered to create the same effect on lower speed roads. The low maintenance is a benefit, especially in the cold temperatures. Bernardo asked what it is going to take to demonstrate the effectiveness at higher speeds. Bob said it is matter of convincing Northern Region DOT engineers. Jerry said LED is a design exception to the federal rules. Bruce recommended that Bob look into best practices in the lower 48 as to their effectiveness.

b. 2006-2009 TIP Amendment #9

Donna referenced the summary sheet that explains the specific changes made.

1. College Road- Increased by \$300K in Phase 3 and the project moved from 2011 to 2009; and decreased phase 7 by \$150K.
2. Illinois Street- All of phase 4 funding was moved to 2010, since it is not ready. But if Economic Recovery funds were allocated, the \$6.6 million Barnette Bridge would go in 2009, as listed with the other Recovery potential projects. Ethan clarified that this is on a separate list because it cannot show it in 2 places at the same time on the same TIP because it is fiscally constrained. If the Economic Recovery does not pass, then it will be moved back.

Bruce questioned doing all of this shuffling when the Bill has not yet been passed. He pointed out that it can be modified during public comment. He suggested having an A and B list to fit the two potential courses the Bill could take. Donna pointed out that the MPO has less time than the state and if it was to happen on the accelerated time frame of 75 days as it currently states, 2 weeks delay is a big deal.

Bernardo asked about it not being ready for construction. Ethan confirmed that ROW is the issue and that everyone is going to condemnation. Bernardo asked if it will be ready in 2010 and Ethan said it is a process. Donna is hopeful but not certain. Donna stated the bridge is shovel-ready specifically because there are no ROW issues.

3. Noble Street- Donna explained that only the funding source has changed for this project. DOT discovered \$414K in excess General Funds (GF) for the Noble Street project. Ethan said that it was an unobligated balance re-appropriation.
4. Preventative Maintenance (PM)- Donna added a design phase for the Load Centers using \$53.9 of the excess money freed up by the Noble Street project. Previously it was at \$892.8 and now it is at \$946.7 due to the addition of PM funding. Bob asked about the PM design funds. He asked if \$75K was being added for the next phase of it. Donna replied that it is for 2009 and 2010 because a consultant is needed.
5. University Avenue Widening- Donna reported that \$1 million in design funding is not needed and has been removed. In 2009, \$6 million is needed in utilities and \$4.8 million is needed for ROW. Again, some of the excess \$414K freed up from the Noble Street Project ended up here, for an increase from \$9 million to \$10.8 million. Bernardo asked where the \$4.8 million and the \$6 million came from. Donna explained that \$1million went from Phase 2 to Phase 3. Additional funds came from GO Bond (\$1 million) and GF appropriation (\$5 million), plus there was FCTP funding freed up because Phillips Field Road was moved (\$3.5 million freed). If Phillips Field Road does not receive the Economic Recovery, then regular CTP money from

University will be moved to Phillips Field Road, and will be supplemented by additional GO Bond money as it is to be used only on University. There is a backup plan to ensure that all money is obligated.

6. Wendell Street ADA Compliance Project

It has been moved to the Recovery section and can be moved back if not funded by the Recovery funding.

7. Conformity (CMAQ)- Donna noted that ADA compliant curb cuts had been added previously. Also FMATS has set aside \$70K for conformity and modeling for the LRTP as well as for the 2009-2012 TIP Conformity Analysis. Sierra Research's bill came in higher than what was anticipated was \$22K and now it is \$24.7K. The curb cut project reduced PM 2.5 funds (approved by the borough). Currently there is \$725K in park and ride, as part of the FTA portion of the TIP. Additional money is being requested as part of the Economic Recovery which would make this project more of a staged approach. Stage 1 would be Recovery funding and Stage 2 will be CMAQ funding. Bernardo asked about the Park and Ride and what is being done. Donna said that she has talked to David Leone about it, but has nothing to offer at this time, except that they are looking at installing up to 10 park and rides as part of the Economic Recovery.

8. North Pole/Homestead Rd- Donna said that the bids came back \$50K more than the engineer's estimates and anticipates needing another \$70K (includes engineering and ICAP) which has been added in this amendment. The bids opened 2 weeks ago and this project is going to construction. Bill relayed Mayor Isaacson's concern about the timing for the design of the North Pole Pavement Rehabilitation Project. He questioned why it is taking so long and if there is any way that it can be accelerated. Donna replied that it has been moved up from 2011 to 2010 in response to this request. Ethan said that it depends on how many SHPO issues there are. And DOT is hesitant to pave something that does not have sufficient pavement structure under it. Additionally, on North Pole High School Blvd, the sidewalk is lower than the pavement. And on Refinery Road, if you raise the grade you could have wetland issues or SHPO issues. And being that this is FHWA funded, these issues must be considered carefully. If these are all determined to be non-issues, it could go a lot sooner. This timeframe is conservative, a less conservative estimate would be 6 months or less.

9. 2nd Street and Moore Avenue- Donna said that this has been moved out for construction in 2009, but she believes that this money is being reallocated by Mayor Whittaker. Bernardo believes that it could be moved to pave Pioneer Park parking. Ethan said that that would require re-appropriation that only the sponsor could do. Donna said that the Borough would have to take that request to the legislature. Bernardo said that the Borough may have done this and that he would confirm.

Donna said that the same applies with the Wilbur Extension. Since neither of these projects are currently going, she reported moving this into 2010. Donna reported having mentioned this at past Policy Committee meetings and reminded again that somebody has to make a legislative change in order for that to happen. Ethan reported that the governor is looking to take money back that has not been expended due to a State budget shortfall. Donna therefore advised using that approximately \$3 million soon. Ethan said that this project is on hold per the Mayor's direction.

10. Barnette Street- Donna reported making a small scope change and adding funding as determined at December's Policy Committee Meeting.

11. Cartright Road- Donna said that it has reduced to match the amount that was appropriated because it was a GF appropriation. Phases 3 and 7 were in 2008 and now they are in 2009.
12. Cushman Street- Donna reported a slight decrease in amount of funding as changed at the December Policy Committee Meeting. Ethan said there is less funding because some of it was expended in 2008 on this project and that Donna should meet with Shelly. Ethan confirmed that the GTI funding was still \$500.
13. Coordinators Office- Donna added \$3,800 from North Pole that was received in 2008 and was not spent.
14. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)- Donna reported that FMATS recovered \$78K PL funds from DOT as mentioned earlier. So for 2009 there is \$18.8 in 381 funding and \$178.7 PL funding, therefore reducing the need to use 381 money.
15. Wickersham- Donna reported that construction was moved to 2010.
16. Wilbur- As mentioned earlier, this money needs to be re-appropriated.
17. Funding Summary- Donna said that applicable, balanced adjustments were made.
18. Economic Recovery/FTA projects- Bruce gave an update on this new phase of the existing project. The project name is the Fairbanks Intermodal Truck Staging Area funded by either 5309 or 5307, and for FY09 is at \$18 million.
19. National Highway System (NHS) projects within the FMATS boundary- Donna took this information from the design status report. Ethan said that South Cushman is wrong and will let Donna know.
20. Other Projects within the FMATS boundary- Bruce discussed the extension to Delta Junction and its potential.

Donna said that in order to make this Amendment #9 as described, it must have a public comment period due to the guidelines in the Public Participation Plan. In order to keep on top of the potentially short and ever-changing timeline in the Economic Recovery Bill drafts, it may be necessary to initiate this process *before* taking it to the Policy Committee. Ethan spoke of the extent of the cumulative changes and that it exceeds what could be done as an Administrative Modification. Donna requested that the Technical Committee take these changes to their Policy Committee members to explain the changes and ask for their feedback. If approved to move forward, the public comment period will begin February 9, 2009. FMATS will host 2 Open House meetings, one in North Pole and one in Fairbanks, on February 24th and 25th, respectively. Additionally, Donna will be presenting this information in various public forums, Transportation Sub-Committee, Borough Assembly, North Pole.

Bruce asked if the Amendment #9 will be on the website and recommended that Donna and Ethan draft a paragraph that clarifies the economic stimulus aspect of this and that it is subject to wide variations depending on the composition of the final bill, a disclaimer to avoid confusion.

Bruce mentioned that since this is an Amendment, that it will have to go to the State for approval. Donna reported having been working on getting commitments to get this processed.

Ethan recommended that Donna discuss bypassing the Policy Committee with Steve Titus. Donna asked Alice Edwards if she would have a problem with this process. Alice said that it would not be a problem for her.

Bernardo asked about the lighting additions to the Johanson Expressway. Donna answered that it was a project to relocate the lights because they are being hit by cars.

- **MOTION:** To issue the 2006-2009 TIP Draft Amendment #9 and for permission to make technical changes as required. (Bruce/Bernardo) None opposed. Approved.

Donna stated that it will be a 30 day comment period. Shortly thereafter it will get Policy Committee approval at the March 18 meeting and then will be submitted to the Governor by the middle of March.

9. Public Comment Period

No comments.

10. Other Issues

c. Resolution by City Councilman- Opposition to 2-way Cushman traffic North of 10th Avenue

Bernardo read the draft Resolution to be brought to the February 9, 2009 Fairbanks City Council meeting. Bernardo added that this Cushman Street a Signature Street and is the fundamental basis of the downtown plan and there is money oriented in the TIP to do this. Bernardo asks that the committee discuss this important issue.

Bruce spoke about the safety issue and a traffic issue as raised in the Resolution. He did not agree with the 4th "Whereas statement" in the resolution.

Bruce asked where this opposition is coming from. Bob said that he sees errors in the facts that are presented in the resolution, for example the cost, the air quality, the congestion issue. The implementation studies have already been done to show that these are non-issues. Bob pointed out that there has always been a group that was in opposition to this conversion.

Jerry added that the budget situation with the City of Fairbanks is stretched. So in defense of the resolution, he said that it may be aimed at using the funds for more practical purposes, such as potholes and maintenance.

Donna clarified that this money can *only* be used on Cushman 2-way and Gaffney. Maybe this point is misunderstood as this money cannot use this elsewhere. Jennifer asked where the funding for Cushman 2-way is coming from. Donna explained that the GTI funding was a State appropriation, whereas the GF-GC is State funding for use on Cushman and Gaffney. Making the the 381 funding the *only* flexible spending for this project, which is valued at \$380K. Donna acknowledged, however, that \$380K could go a long way in pothole patching. Bruce asked if the other money could be re-appropriated by the State and Donna confirmed that this is possible and that whoever sponsored the appropriation would be responsible for going to the Legislature to get this changed.

Bruce suggested that it could be a Recovery Project. Donna said that it is State funded up to this point and would not be possible to shift to federal funding. Bob said that it could not be ready in time.

Bernardo expressed his concern about the opposition to this project as it is the beginning of an integrated land use and transportation approach to planning. He stated that it is a forward thinking

use of the funding. He also pointed out that everyone has signed off on the Vision Fairbanks. He emphasized the importance of communicating to the Council Members the value of this project.

Bruce emphasized the importance of lobbying the FMATS policy committee. Bernardo asked about how to approach the inaccuracies. Bob said yes. Bob offered to speak to this effect at the meeting. Bob also pointed out the potential delay that could occur if the resolution passed. Bob also said that every attempt to get approval along the way has been made successfully.

11. Informational Items

a. Economic Recovery Bill

Donna referenced the packet and described the "fast" and "slow award" scenarios for FMATS and transit. The information was presented in a map. The detail of the Bill will be saved for once it is approved.

b. Training- Context Sensitive Solutions

Donna reported that she asked DOT to bring this training to Fairbanks. Bernardo agreed that this would be good because more people could attend.

c. Airport Way West Improvements- DOT&PF/FHA Open House

Donna informed the committee about the upcoming Open House at Pikes Waterfront Lodge from 4 to 7 pm on Wednesday, February 11. DOT is working on the preliminary engineering and environmental studies and is soliciting public comments on a roundabout at Airport and discussing the existing traffic issues at the intersection of Dale and Hoselton. Donna and Tara are unable to attend due to training.

d. Policy Committee Action Items from January 21, 2009

Donna included this in the packet just for information purposes only.

e. STIP Call for Nominations and Project Criteria Review

Ethan reported that DOT extended the public comment period to March 2. This is part of the process for the 2009-2013 STIP.


f. Vision Fairbanks Public Meeting

The meeting will be held on February 11 at the Carlson Center. Donna and Tara are unable to attend due to training. The consultants, Crandall Arambula, will be present.

12. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn.** (Bernardo/Ethan) None opposed. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.

The next scheduled Technical Committee Meeting is March 4, 2009, at noon at City Hall, Engineer's Conference Room.

Approved: 
Donna Gardino
FMATS Technical Committee

Date: 3/4/09